



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
219 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604**

THOMAS G. BRUTON
CLERK

312-435-6860

August 23, 2021

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**In re: *Joann Martin v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*
Case No. 1-15-cv-07805**

Dear Counsel:

I have been contacted by Judge Andrea R. Wood, who presided over the above-referenced case.

Judge Wood has informed me that it has been brought to her attention that while she presided over this case she or her spouse owned stock in Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Judge Wood no longer had any financial interest in Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. after November 4, 2016. The case was subsequently resolved through a settlement and dismissed by stipulation of the parties on January 24, 2018. Judge Wood's financial interest neither affected nor impacted her decisions in the case. However, the stock ownership would have required

recusal under the Code of Conduct for United States Judges. Thus, Judge Wood directed that I notify the parties of the conflict.

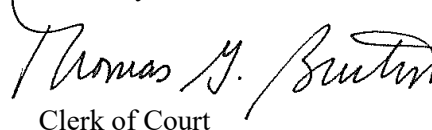
[Advisory Opinion 71](#), from the Judicial Conference Codes of Conduct Committee, provides the following guidance for addressing grounds for disqualification that are not discovered until after a judge has participated in a case:

[A] judge should disclose to the parties the facts bearing on disqualification as soon as those facts are learned, even though that may occur after entry of the decision. The parties may then determine what relief they may seek and a court (without the disqualified judge) will decide the legal consequence, if any, arising from the participation of the disqualified judge in the entered decision.

Although Advisory Opinion 71 contemplated disqualification after a Court of Appeals oral argument, the Committee explained that “[s]imilar considerations would apply when a judgment was entered in a district court by a judge and it is later learned that the judge was disqualified.”

With Advisory Opinion 71 in mind, you are invited to respond to Judge Wood’s disclosure of a conflict. Should you wish to respond, please submit your response on or before **September 23, 2021**. Any response will be considered by another judge of this court without the participation of Judge Wood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas G. Burton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Thomas" is written in a larger, more prominent script, followed by "G." and "Burton". The signature is positioned above the printed name "Clerk of Court".

Clerk of Court